

(Approved Minutes)

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MEETING OF APRIL 20, 2015**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jim Tallberg called the Monday, April 20, 2015 meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Elevator Meeting Room of the Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

Present: Jim Tallberg, Chairman
Phil Benoit, Vice Chairman
Rocco Sanzo, Commissioner
Neil Geldof, Commissioner
Frank Simboski, Commissioner
Jeffrey Thomen, Commissioner (arrived at 6:53 p.m.)

Absent: Kevin Clements, Commissioner

Also: Eileen Knapp, Recording Secretary

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sanzo to amend the agenda, adding Item #7, Discussion and possible action on proposed Charter. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Benoit. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was present to speak.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Benoit to approve the minutes and action of the April 7, 2015 meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Geldof. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC BUILDING COMMISSION

No one from the PBC was present to speak.

V. RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM ROCKY HILL TOWN STAFF

Chairman Tallberg said the Town Manager wanted to let this Commission know that the Town is not currently following the Organizational Structure specified for the Finance Director position under Section 701 of the Charter. This Section says there “shall be a Department of Finance headed by a Director of Finance. The Department shall include a Tax Collector, An Assessor and a Purchasing Agent...” In reality, the functions of the Tax Collector, Assessor and Town Clerk are stand alone departments reporting directly to the Town Manager, not the Director of Finance. Also, the Director of Finance serves as the Purchasing Agent for Rocky Hill. Chairman Tallberg asked the Town Manager to submit some language to amend this section of the Charter for their consideration.

VI. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON PROPOSED CHARTER

The Commission agreed to follow up with Brian Addy of the PBC and the Town Manager with respect to updating Section 701.

A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Benoit to accept page 1 as written. Motion was seconded by Commission Simboski.

A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT was made by Commissioner Simboski to accept Sections 101, 102 and 103. Friendly Amendment accepted.

All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

All effective dates in the Charter will have to be updated to the date that the new Charter is passed.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Geldof that upon completion of the draft, all amendments to the subject Charter Revision Date shall take effect on the day in which it has passed. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Simboski. No vote – MOTION FAILED.

The Commission decided not to make motions for every change, but to come to a consensus on the changes, update them on a draft Charter and vote on the changes at the next meeting.

Section 202 Elective Officers: Talk to the Town Manager/Town Attorney to see if there is a need for Selectmen in Town. Check to see how many Justices of Peace are needed/required by law.

Section 203 Terms of Elective Office: There was a discussion about whether or not to increase the terms for the Board of Education to four years and whether or not to stagger those terms. Current members of the Board of Education expressed concerns about continuity on the Board. Two years is just enough time to get new commissioners familiar with what is happening, and then their term ends. One suggestion was that if a Commissioner’s term ends they can always run for another term. The consensus was to change the Board of Education Terms to 4 years.

Throughout the document there will be changes to make all “he” references gender neutral.

Section 207 Minority Representation: There was a lengthy discussion about changing the makeup of the Council to 5 majority representatives and 4 minority representatives. There was a

consensus that this would be beneficial to the public and they agreed to make this change to 5-4. Reference to Selectmen may be eliminated.

Section 210 Voting Districts: Change the number of Voting Districts to 3.

Section 301 Election and Qualification: There was a discussion about whether or not to remove the last line of this section, “However, the candidate next in the order of votes received for Mayor shall have the votes he received for Mayor shall have the votes he received for Mayor included in the compilation and the determination of the Council membership.” The discussion centered around whether or not the losing Mayoral candidate should get a seat on the Town Council.

(Commissioner Thomen arrives at 6:53 p.m.)

The Commission agreed to leave that line in.

Section 303 Appointments B. Other Appointed Officers: There was a suggestion that they remove the line reading “...but this shall not preclude any other member of the Council from making nominations for the same positions.” This would mean that the Council would have to pick appointees for offices only from the names that are submitted by the political parties, instead of also being able to accept nominations for other appointees from Council Members. There was concern that if this change was made it would make it harder for a member of the independent party to become an appointee. After a long discussion, the Commission agreed to leave this line in.

Section 402 Powers: This Section states that the Town Council shall choose a Clerk for the Council. Commissioner Sanzo said this position is usually appointed by the Town Manager. Chairman Tallberg said he would check with the Town Manager to see if this line should be taken removed.

Section 403 Organization: There was a discussion about who shall be allowed to administer the oath of office to all Members. Chairman Tallberg said he would take a look at the wording and discuss it at the next meeting. All references to “Chairman Pro Tem” should be changed to Deputy Mayor.

Section 404 Procedure: The terminology may need to be updated where it references the Council keeping a “journal” which contains “rules and procedures” of the Council. Chairman Tallberg will check with Staff.

Section 405 Introduction to Ordinances: Terminology may need to be updated to address and include computer technology.

Section 406 Public Hearings and Passage of Ordinances: Check with Staff to see if all references are current and accurate.

Section 408 Obligatory Referendum: There was a discussion about increasing the monetary amounts that were established when this Charter was created to current day standards. The Consensus was to increase the dollar amounts from \$150,000 to \$300,000.

All references to Connecticut State General Statutes should be checked for changes.

Section 412 Removals and Suspensions Section A.: Remove the reference to the Town Clerk. The Council shall only have the power to remove or suspend the Town Manger.

Section 413 Investigation: Change all references to Chairman Pro Tem to Deputy Mayor. Change “books and papers” to “documents”.

Section 416 Sale, Lease or Purchase of Real Property: Change dollar amounts in this section to \$100,000, \$100,000 and \$15,000 respectively.

Section 504 Acting Town Manager: Rocky Hill does not have an Assistant Town manger. In the absence of the Town Manager, the Police Chief usually assumes the Town Manager’s powers and duties. Chairman Tallberg said he would get the Town Manager’s opinion on the proper working for this section.

The next meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, May 6th and Monday May 18th.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sanzo to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Benoit. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen A. Knapp
Recording Secretary